



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT SEVEN  
MARCH 5, 2025  
ASH WEDNESDAY

## WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH!

You are welcomed, affirmed, and loved here; our faith informs us that you are a child of a loving God.

Your characteristics and gifts will enrich our congregation. In this community, you will be celebrated, embraced, and honored, no matter how you identify or how your identity may evolve.

Wherever you are on your faith journey, we invite you to join us in our diverse yet united experience.

*Please use this time for quiet preparation for worship.*

### PRELUDE

Prelude in F Minor, BWV 534

J.S. Bach, ca. 1710

### ENTER TO WORSHIP

*At the tone of the bell, the ministers enter.*

*A period of silence is observed.*

### \*INVOCATION

Rev. Becky David

Leader: God be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

God of compassion and justice,  
the worship you choose for us is to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to share bread with the hungry,  
to shelter the homeless poor.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn  
and your healing shall spring up quickly.

**People: So in praise and wonder, we come to worship you  
not just with our words  
but with our hearts and our lives.  
Glory and honor be to you, O God,  
Creator of a new heaven and a new earth;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### \*KYRIE ELEISON

William Mathias, 1976

Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Leader: A reading from the book of the prophet Joel, the second chapter.

Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,  
for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—  
a day of darkness and gloom,  
a day of clouds and thick darkness!  
Like blackness spread upon the mountains  
a great and powerful army comes;  
their like has never been from of old,  
nor will be again after them  
in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the Lord,  
return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;  
rend your hearts and not your clothing.  
Return to the Lord, your God,  
for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,  
and relents from punishing.  
Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,  
and leave a blessing behind him,  
a grain offering and a drink offering  
for the Lord, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
sanctify a fast;  
call a solemn assembly;  
gather the people.  
Sanctify the congregation;  
assemble the aged;  
gather the children,  
even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,  
and the bride her canopy.  
Between the vestibule and the altar  
let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.  
Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord,  
and do not make your heritage a mockery,  
a byword among the nations.  
Why should it be said among the peoples,  
'Where is their God?'"

*The Choir introduces the Antiphon, after which the People join in singing the Antiphon, repeating as indicated after the Choir chants the verses.*



The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness.  
He will not always accuse us, nor will he keep his anger for ever.

*Antiphon*

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.  
For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.

*Antiphon*

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us.  
As a father cares for his children, so does the Lord care for those who fear him.

*Antiphon*

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

Rev. David

Leader: A reading from the gospel according to Mark, the sixth chapter.

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTION

Rev. David

ANTHEM

Richard Farrant (d. 1506)

“Call to remembrance”

Psalm 25: 5-6

Call to remembrance, O Lord, thy tender mercy and loving kindness,  
which have been ever of old.  
O remember not the sins and offenses of my youth,  
but according to thy mercy, think thou on me, O God, for thy goodness.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Rev. Samuelson

Leader: Holy and Most Beautiful Lord,  
We are humbled by Your compassion and mercy.  
We recognize that within us is much that has hurt and offended You.  
We acknowledge our faithlessness  
and admit that we are undeserving of Your commitment to us.  
(Silence)

But now, empowered by Your grace,  
given to us through Jesus's life, death and resurrection.  
We seek to renew our commitment,  
and consciously deepen our relationship with You.

**People: We recognize, O Lord, that we are simply dust.  
Remind us through these ashes of our dependence on You.  
May we know the strength of Your Spirit as we seek to follow You;  
May we know the discipline of Your love as we seek to draw nearer to You;  
May we know the insight of Your wisdom as we seek to learn of You.  
As we receive the ashes upon our foreheads,  
may we know the joy of sharing with You in ministry,  
in suffering, in death and in life.  
For Your glory and your kingdom's sake.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Rev. David and Rev. Samuelson

*After the ministers impose ashes on one another, those who wish may come forward  
to receive the mark of the cross on the forehead or palm of the hand.*

*If you do not wish to receive the ashes, remain in prayer.*

*Those who are worshipping with us online are invited to make the mark of the cross on your forehead or palm.  
When the ashes are imposed, you are invited to say, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”  
After all who wish to receive ashes have received them, the prayers of confession are concluded with these words:*

*Blessing of Ashes* by Jan Richardson

All those days you felt like dust, like dirt,  
 as if all you had to do was turn your face toward the wind  
 and be scattered to the four corners  
 or swept away by the smallest breath as insubstantial—

Did you not know what the Holy One can do with dust?

This is the day we freely say we are scorched.

This is the hour we are marked by what has made it through the burning.

This is the moment we ask for the blessing that lives within the ancient ashes,  
 that makes its home inside the soil of this sacred earth.

So let us be marked not for sorrow.

And let us be marked not for shame.

Let us be marked not for false humility

or for thinking we are less than we are

but for claiming what God can do

within the dust, within the dirt, within the stuff of which the world is made,

and the stars that blaze in our bones,

and the galaxies that spiral inside the smudge we bear.

*Silence*

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rev. Samuelson

Leader: God of love  
 hear the cry of those who yearn for love;  
 fractured families, broken homes,  
 neglected, unwanted, alone.  
 God of love

**All: hear our prayer.**

Leader: God of justice  
 hear the cry of those who yearn for justice;  
 persecuted and oppressed,  
 exploited, ill-treated, broken.  
 God of justice

**All: hear our prayer.**

Leader: God of peace  
 hear the cry of those who yearn for peace;  
 in battle zones and broken states,  
 frightened, fearful, anxious.  
 God of peace

**All: hear our prayer.**

Leader: God of healing  
hear the cry of those who yearn for healing;  
physical and spiritual  
hurting, weakened, depressed.  
God of healing

**All: hear our prayer.**

Leader: God of mercy  
Hear the cry of those who yearn for mercy;  
convicted, in need of your Grace,  
contrite, humble, bowed down.  
God of mercy

**All: hear our prayer.**

Leader: May you know  
The peace of God  
The love of God  
The justice of God  
The healing and mercy of God  
This day and all days.

**All: Amen.**

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,**

**for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

#### HYMN

"Lord, who throughout these forty days"

*St. Flavian, Day's Psalter, 1562*

*Claudia F. I. Hernaman, 1873, alt.*

1 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and  
2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend and did the vic-tory  
3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas-sion-  
4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be

pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.  
win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con-quer sin.  
tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.  
past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at - tain at last.

*All depart in silence.*

LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S LITURGY

The Rev. Becky David, *preacher*

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *worship leader*

Joshua Stafford, *organist and director*

The First Church Choir

Peter Murray, *livestream ministry*

Your offering today will go to support the Good Samaritan Ministry of First Church. For decades now, our Good Samaritan Fund has been providing financial assistance to our neighbors who are struggling to make ends meet and are unable to pay their utility bills. Every effort is made to meet the unique needs of each person seeking financial assistance. The need, here, in the Columbus area continues to grow as the number of those seeking financial assistance climbs each month. You may also give online following the QR code below. Thank you for generous support of this vital First Church ministry to our wider community.

*To give online, please scan this QR code.*



## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

**Interim Senior Minister:** Rev. Becky David, M.Div.  
**Designated Minister:** Rev. Joanna Samuelson, M.Div.  
**Minister of Music:** Joshua Stafford, M.M.  
**Interim Director of Faith Formation:** Leslie Fulford  
**Administrative Manager:** Amy Wagner  
**Communications Manager:** Melissa Kulwicki  
**Office Assistant:** Pat Patterson  
**Business Administrator:** Annette McCormick  
**Maintenance:** Mike Sharrock  
**Custodians:** Alexis Wayne, Bill McCabe, Bob O'Brien  
**Handbell Director:** Jennifer Fry  
**Wedding Coordinators:** Amy Wagner, Shelly Gies, Margaret Cipriani, Denise Vogt  
**Nursery Staff:** Miranda Brooks, Shelly Gies, Celecia Smith  
**Commissioned Minister for Social Justice:** Tom Brownfield  
**Commissioned Minister for Spiritual Formation and Direction:** Jacquelyn Dean  
**Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Program Coordinator:** Gary Glover  
**Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Training Coordinator:** Wendy Kennedy  
**Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinator:** Susie Loik  
**Senior Deacon:** Martha Worth  
**Deacons:** Allen Baker, Heather Jones, Brian Kemp, Allison Lowery Palmer, Dayna McCrary, Matt Myers, Fran Panek, Gary Seigerst, Thomason Smith

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Chairperson:** Frank Cook  
**Trustees:** Matthew Bendick, Todd Jacobson, Victor John, Melody Leidheiser, Janet Miller, Sarah Reed, Judy Smith, (Secretary), Hugh Schultz

### CHURCH COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

**Moderator:** Sarah Reed  
**Moderator-elect:**  
**Treasurer:** Ramona Moenter  
**Treasurer-elect:**  
**Secretary:** Amanda Butler  
**Secretary-elect:**  
**Nominating Chair:** Gregory Halbe

### COMMISSIONERS

**Church Stewardship and Church Growth:** Stephen Sterrett  
**Church Stewardship and Church Growth-elect:** Kathy Reed  
**Church Vitality:** Pat Patterson  
**Church Vitality-elect:**  
**Communications and Technology Commission:** Mike Kennedy  
**Communications and Technology Commission-elect:**  
**Faith Formation Commission:** Cami Curren  
**Faith Formation Commission-elect:** Mariner Taft  
**House & Grounds:** Eric Klintworth  
**House & Grounds-elect:**  
**Justice & Mercy:** James Lowe  
**Justice & Mercy-elect:** Janice Taft  
**Music, Arts & Heritage:** Jim Griffin  
**Music, Arts & Heritage-elect:** Cheryl Hoskinson  
**Member-at-Large:** Martha Wilson  
**Personnel:** Sandra Mathias  
**Personnel-elect:**  
**Youth Member-at-Large:** Sebastian Kulwicki

## FIRST CHURCH IS A FAITH COMMUNITY

- † Called together by God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of life, to worship, pray and serve;
- † Led by Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Savior, to learn the faith and welcome all God's children;
- † Empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness God's love and justice between ourselves, and throughout the world.

We covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ and one another, and bind ourselves in the presence of God to live together in all God's ways as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit and holy scripture. The church acknowledges that all members have the right of individual interpretation of the principles of the Christian faith and respects them in their honest convictions. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord, the church recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.

## OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT

We, the members of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, welcome and affirm all. We believe we are all created in God's image and called to love our neighbors as Jesus loves us. We believe we are many members, but one body in Christ, called to unite all people in God's love. We are a community seeking God's presence and love in our lives. We seek to unite persons of all ages, races, nationalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, sexes, gender identities and expressions, family structures, mental, intellectual and physical conditions, economic circumstances, political, theological and faith backgrounds. Together in our diversity, and being empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit, we will "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God." (Micah 6:8)

—Adopted September 8, 2002 by the congregation  
Revisions adopted January 27, 2019 by the congregation



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